DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 891 CS 010 420

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TITLE Kids Helping Kids Readathon, Grade 4.
INSTITUTION Kosair Children's Hospital, Louisville, KY.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 35p.; For other booklets in this series, see CS 010 415-424.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accident Prevention; Accidents; *Child Health; Children; Diseases; *Fund Raising; Grade 4; *Hospitals; Intermediate Grades; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Participation; *Physical Health; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Processes; *Reading Programs; Writing Processes

ABSTRACT

This booklet (one of a series of 10 booklets in a reading project to benefit Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky) contains 10 stories especially written for fourth graders by educators. The stories are about: children's feelings about disease and treatment; accidents and accident proneness; children's reactions to the death by drowning of a classmate; a child's feelings about her Daddy's hunting; and similar topics. Students read the stories in the booklet and answer comprehension questions, and pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered. The stories or story topics may be used in the classroom for instructional purposes and are intended to integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. (SR)

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What is it?

It is an educational project designed to benefit KOSAIR Children's Hospital. Students at each grade level (K-8) read ten stories and answer comprehension questions. Pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered.

What are these stories about?

The stories are about: diseases; accidents; accident prevention; children's reactions to hospital stays; dealing with personal differences; etc. For older children, the topics of alcohol and drug abuse are also included. Many of these stories highlight personal triumphs.

Who reads these stories?

Any child whose teacher and parent(s) support the project.

Can children receive help with reading and answering questions?

Yes. Parents are encouraged to help their child (regardless of reading ability) read and answer the questions.

How much instructional time will this take?

Very little. Teachers simply take a child's word for his participation and record the money returned. Upon completion of the program, the teacher completes a brief checklist for any prizes earned.

BENEFITS

Reading/Writing Experience

These stories are interesting and educationally sound at each grade level. The questions following each selection are based on a new questioning strategy. Children will be actively engaged in the reading/writing process.

Philanthropy

Children learn to be helping members of society as they raise money for less fortunate children.

Parental Involvement/Interaction

Children will have the opportunity to discuss with parents ideas and concerns that may never have been brought out without the questions following these stories.

Integration of Subjects

Teachers may use stories or story topics in the classroom for instructional purposes. Teachers will be provided with motivational and educational strategies to accompany these stories. These ideas help integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. Many are based on whole language ideas, and higher level thinking skills are encouraged.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

All children will receive an achievement certificate signifying their participation in the program. Children who collect $10 or more in pledges will receive prizes for their accomplishments. Best of all, children will gain a sense of pride as they help other children.

For more information, you may write of call: Susan Ramp Ridout, Ph.D.
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Kosair Children's Hospital's

READATHON

KIDS HELPING KIDS

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STORIES WRITTEN BY EDUCATORS FROM INDIANA AND KENTUCKY

A LETTER TO THE PARENT
ABOUT THIS BOOK AND YOUR CHILD

This booklet contains stories especially written for children of your child's age. They have all been written by educators. Many of them tell of the fears and feelings these educators had when they were children. Some of them are written through the eyes of a parent.

The stories deal with topics which are sometimes difficult for us to think or talk about. Yet, these very topics are the ones which our children most desperately need to have an adult share with them. Some of the stories may make you and your child cry or feel sad. Others will lift your spirits in memorable ways. Hopefully, one or two will cause you to say, "I had those same feelings."

It is our sincere hope you will use these stories as starters for a special time of sharing with your child.

No one knows your child better than you do. Therefore, we encourage you to preview the stories before your child reads them or you read them to your child. Some stories may be best read with your child. It is, of course, your right and responsibility to exclude any story which you may feel is beyond your child's present level of maturity.

At the end of each story are questions to be answered. At your discretion, your child may either write or discuss the answers with a responsible adult. Questions which are well suited for discussion are marked with asterisks (*). Questions answered in either form may be counted toward your child's fund raising efforts for the children of Kosair.

These booklets are in their first printing. If you have suggestions or comments which would improve their effectiveness in helping future readers, please call or write to:

Susan J. Gibbs
Director of Annual Giving and Special Events
Children's Hospital Foundation
601 S. Floyd Street
Louisville, KY 40202
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A Visit to the Vet

Colleen Sullivan
Deep Springs Elementary

Max and Kolby were two mischievous little Yorkie puppies. They liked to get one another into trouble. One day as they played tug-o-war with their little stuffed snake, Kolby held the snake as tightly as he could with his teeth. Then he held Max down with one of his paws. This made Max very angry. Max wasn't as big as Kolby, but he was as strong. They growled and growled and went around in circles as they gripped the snake between their teeth. One of them would usually have let go by this time, but both of them really wanted this snake.

Kolby shook his head angrily as Max held on. Max was determined that this time he was going to win. Finally, with all his might, Max jerked his head and ran. He took the stuffed snake with him.

This, of course, made Kolby very angry, so Kolby began to chase Max. The dogs ran under the table, around the chairs, up onto the couch, down the back of the couch, under the table, up the stairs, over the bed, under the bed, through the bathroom, under the bed, over the bed again, and down the stairs. They finally came to rest under the table.

Kolby was still angry, and he was thinking of a way to get that snake from Max. Max lay and chewed on the snake. Kolby lay across the room staring, waiting for the chance to run as quickly as he could and grab it. Suddenly, Max turned his head to listen for a noise that he thought he heard. Kolby ran as fast as he could to grab the snake. Max didn't see Kolby. As Kolby grabbed the snake in his mouth, he also grabbed Max with one paw. Max struggled to get up and started to become very angry.

They began growling and fussing at one another, and then there was a cry. Max knew he was hurt, but he wasn't quite sure what had happened. He knew his eye felt funny. He couldn't open it to see what was wrong.

Kolby began barking for Max, trying to ask Max what was wrong. When he found Max upstairs, he noticed that his eye was closed. What had happened?

Max needed to be taken to the animal hospital, and he didn't like that! He had been there before to get shots, and he knew he didn't like it! Max's owner, Bobby, tried to comfort Max as they drove to the hospital. He let Max sit on his lap and explained to him that the doctor was going to give him some medicine for his eye. The medicine would make him feel better. Max was scared. He just knew the doctor was going to give him a shot.

In the waiting room at the hospital, Max heard crying and barking. This really frightened him. He knew that doctor must be hurting those animals in there. What was going on behind that closed door? What was the doctor doing in there?

Why did this have to happen to him? Max's head was just filled with questions. Finally, Max's name was called. Max began to shake as Bobby held him tightly to comfort him. Bobby told Max that everything was going to be all right.

The room seemed so big, and there was that funny medicine smell. Where was the needle? Max's eyes searched the room. He didn't see a needle. This might not be so bad after all. As the doctor closed the door, Max noticed that he looked friendly. He had a nice, soothing voice, just like Bobby had said. As Bobby sat him on the table, the doctor gently took him into his hands. He slowly opened Max's eye and flashed a little light into it. There was a scratch on his eye. This could be fixed with a little medicine three times a day. Max relaxed. This wasn't even half as bad as he had thought. In fact, it wasn't even bad at all!

When Max got home, he was anxious to tell Kolby about his visit to the hospital. But this time, Kolby was nowhere to be seen. Max ran and barked for Kolby. Where was he? On no! Kolby wasn't hurt, too? Finally, Kolby came out from under the table with the snake. He slowly came over to Max and placed the toy in front of Max. This was Kolby's way of telling Max he was sorry. Immediately, Max picked up the snake and gave it back to Kolby. This was Max's way of telling Kolby everything was all right.

Questions

1. What were Kolby and Max like?

2. What was the problem between Kolby and Max?

3. How are Kolby and Max different?

* 4. Are Kolby and Max like any children you know? In what way?

* 5. Tell about a time when you played games like the puppies. What happened?

6. How do you think Kolby hurt Max's eye?

* 7. What kind of lesson do you think Kolby and Max learned from this?

* 8. What did you learn?

* 9. What could have happened if nobody was at home to help Max?

* 10. Explain why it was wrong for the puppies to be playing like they were. What do you think will happen now that they learned their lessons?

*Recommended for discussion

IT'S NOT MY FAULT!

Wanda Fuhry
Slate Run Elementary

Chris always thought of himself as a normal kid, but his parents weren't so sure. If nine little boys went outside to play, only Chris came back with cuts, bruises, bumps, broken glasses, or torn clothes. If they were playing hide-and-seek, only Chris got into a bee's nest. If they were playing near a creek, only Chris got wet. If they camped out, only Chris managed to catch his jeans on fire. He was accident prone in a major way.

Of course, Chris always thought of these accidents as bad luck. It could happen to anybody. He was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. "It's NOT my fault!" he always cried. Mom and Dad shook their heads.

Once he came home crying and holding his head. Mom looked and found a lump the size of Vermont. "What happened?" she wanted to know.

"It was an accident," he said. "I was just rolling down a hill in an old tire, and my head hit a concrete wall. I couldn't help it."

Mom tried to get him to see that if he had looked before he rolled, he would have seen the wall. It was no use. To Chris, it was another case of bad luck. Mom shook her head.

Another time Chris came home. He was screaming with blood running down his face. It scared his mother half to death. She searched his head to see where the blood was coming from. She found a very large cut. She and Chris rushed to the emergency room for stitches. The doctor had to sew the cut shut so it would heal well. On the way there, Mom found out what had happened. Chris' friend, Larry, had thrown a large rock up in the air. It came down on Chris' head. "I couldn't help it," he kept saying. "It was an accident. It wasn't my fault."

Mom tried to explain that if a kid has a large rock in his hands, there is always the chance that someone is going to get hurt. Chris

never seemed to understand. As smart as he was, he could never see danger coming until it was too late. Mom shook her head.

The very next day, Chris was kept inside the house to protect his stitches. He was about ten years old, and ten-year-olds get restless. He begged to go out and play. Mom did her best to keep from giving in to him. Finally, late in the day, she allowed him to go outside for a FEW MINUTES ONLY, to stand on the porch ONLY, to TALK to a friend ONLY. You guessed it! He came in crying because of a large gash in his cheek. Back to the emergency room! More stitches!

The nurses were beginning to know Chris by now. Chris thought it was neat. Mom was embarrassed. The nurses asked what happened. "I was running, and I didn't see a nail sticking out of a board. I kinda ran into it. It was an accident," he explained. Mom shook her head.

Before he was ten, Chris had broken his arm twice and his collar bone once. He had broken or lost several pairs of glasses. He had been poked in the eye by the branch of a tree. He had cut himself tons of times. He had ripped his clothes too many times to count. He had even been bitten on the tongue by a turtle which he was trying to KISS! The kid was a mess.

Chris will probably go through life blaming everything on bad luck. All of his scrapes and bumps will be accidents that aren't his fault. His parents hope he will wise-up by the time he becomes an adult. Actually, they hope he makes it long enough to BE an adult.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Chris' main problem?

2. What does it mean by "being accident prone"?

3. What do you know about having a broken bone?

* 4. Have you ever felt that all the bad things seem to happen only to you? Tell about one of them.

* 5. Do you know people like Chris? Tell about them.

* 6. What caused Chris to get hurt so much?

* 7. Why didn't Chris' friends get hurt as often?

* 8. Do you think Chris will be more careful as he gets older? Why?

* 9. How will you feel about your own accidents now that you have read this story?

* 10. What could Chris' parents have done to help him be more careful?

*Recommended for discussion

Hospital Diary

Janie Whaley
Charlestown Middle School

June 15

Dear Diary,

I'm glad I took you when we headed out the door this morning! I never dreamed I'd be writing to you from a hospital. I'm really kind of scared! I've never been a patient in a hospital before, and I don't know what to expect.

I fainted this morning in the bathroom. When I came to, I felt like I was pounding my head against the counter. I cut my lip but not badly. Mom was sure that I was having some kind of seizure, so she called the doctor. He sent me here to the hospital for tests. The doctor came in at suppertime. He talked to me about epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a disease of the brain and nervous system that causes people to black out or faint. Epileptics may not be able to control their bodies, and they may jerk around when they are "out." He said there are good medicines for it now, but doctors still don't know everything about it. My doctor wants to make sure I don't have it. I hope I don't!

I'm glad I brought a robe. There are people around here all the time.

My tests start early tomorrow, so I'd better try to get some sleep.

Love,
Natalie

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June 16

Dear Diary,

I really feel kind of silly being here. I feel fine now--not dizzy or anything. But I guess there are a few more tests. They take me around in a wheelchair, and I feel like everybody is looking at me. I don't think I'd like to be in a wheelchair all the time.

Some of the tests are easy. I think one was to test balance. I had to touch my nose and walk a line. That was great--no problem! They put me inside one of the machines that was something like an x-ray. I kept thinking about getting stuck in there and smothering. The nurse told me there was no way that could happen.

Everybody here is pretty nice. I like the nurses best who take time to joke around. I think it would be hard to keep up your sense of humor if you were working with people who are really sick. The nurses seem to be pretty good at it!

They check my blood pressure a lot. I guess I'm used to that by now. It sort of tickles.

I'd like to wash my hair, but they won't let me do that yet. The food is pretty good. I get to choose what I want to eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I picked pizza for lunch tomorrow. I might get to go home before lunch though.

Better get some sleep!

Love,
Natalie

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June 17

Dear Diary,

I'm writing this in the morning. I'm tired of the game shows, and I'm tired of my book. Mom's talking to the doctor now. I hope I get to go home today!

I went down to the lounge earlier this morning. I met a really nice girl about my age. She was doing some needlework. I think I'll have Mom get me something like that if I'm going to be here much longer.

--LATER--

I'm home! It feels great! The doctor said everything on the x-ray is normal. He said he wants to see if I feel faint again, and he told me to put my head down between my knees if I feel like I'm going to black out.

Gotta go, Diary. I've got some telephone calls to make!

Love,
Natalie

Questions

1. What is meant by "fainting"?

2. What do you know about a seizure and epilepsy?

3. What should Natalie do if she feels faint?

4. Why did Natalie's mother think it was important to call the doctor?

5. Why did the doctor want to do tests on Natalie?

6. What could happen if Natalie has other seizures?

7. If Natalie had not been at home what might have happened to her?

8. How would you feel if you were suddenly placed in the hospital?

9. What would you write about in a diary if you were in a hospital?

10. What do you think Natalie should tell her friends?

Recommended for discussion

Today's the Day

Marla Adams
North Harrison High School

Sarah woke up early and ran to look out her bedroom window. It had snowed again last night.

"New snow! That will make it easier!" Sarah said excitedly.

Today was the day Sarah's daddy was taking her hunting. She had never been hunting before, but Daddy went often. He brought back rabbits or quail for dinner almost every time he hunted. Sarah liked rabbit; it tasted good. She liked to look at pictures of bunny rabbits in her books. But she liked best of all to watch the ones that wandered into the yard when hunting season was over.

Sarah and Daddy ate a hot breakfast. They left after Sarah waved goodbye to her brothers, sister, and Mommy. As the pair walked toward the small woods near Sarah's house, Daddy asked her, "Do you remember why new snow is good for hunting, Sarah?"

"Because it's easier to see animal tracks," she replied as she hopped along making deep boot marks in the snow.

Sarah liked going places with Daddy. He talked with her about all sorts of animals. He taught her the names of trees. She learned how to identify them by looking at the bark and the leaves. He told her which trees had nuts that were good to eat. Today, Daddy told her, " I will take you along in the spring when I search for mushrooms and in the summer when I pick blackberries."

Sarah let out a "Whoopee!" She ran through the drifted snow and fell on her face. Now Daddy laughed and picked her up. After he set Sarah on her feet, he told her they had better be quiet. If they wern't, all the rabbits would find good hiding places, and they wouldn't see any today.

Daddy told Sarah to look toward the fence row that was about fifty yards in front of them. He asked, "Do you see the tall, brown grass sticking out of the snow by the fence? That's where rabbits sometimes hide. They can find food there, and the dead grass helps them become invisible. It sort of matches their fur, doesn't it?"

"Uh-huh. I don't see any bunnies, Daddy," Sarah answered.

"Maybe we'll see some today, maybe we won't," Daddy said. "Look down, Sarah. What do you see?"

"Animal tracks. Bunny tracks! Just like in my book!" exclaimed Sarah.

Daddy and Sarah walked along the fence row. Sarah stopped to look toward the woods with its clean, fresh snowcover. She saw a movement.

"Look, Daddy. There goes a bunny," she said in a quiet, little voice.

Daddy raised his rifle to his shoulder. Sarah put her fingers in her ears and closed her eyes. Daddy fired the rifle. KABOOM! Sarah opened her eyes in time to see the rabbit run into the woods. She smiled.

Daddy said, "Well, I missed. Guess we may as well head home. All the rabbits have been chased away by the gunshot." Daddy put the safety catch on his rifle and slung it over his shoulder. Sarah reached for his hand and skipped along beside him. She worked hard to keep up with his long stride all the way home.

To this day, Sarah believes that her daddy missed the rabbit on purpose. She never went hunting with Daddy again unless it was for mushrooms and blackberries. She never forgot her first hunting trip.

Questions

1. What is new snow like?

2. How can you identify the names of trees?

* 3. Describe Sarah's first hunting trip.

4. Why is it easier to see animal tracks in new snow than in snow that's been on the ground for a few days?

5. Why can't Sarah and Daddy search for mushrooms and blackberries now?

* 6. How do you know that Daddy was usually a good shot?

* 7. What will happen to the rabbits' hiding places along the fence row if the snow gets deeper?

* 8. Why do you think Sarah believes her daddy missed the rabbit on purpose?

* 9. If Sarah had never seen rabbit tracks in her book, what do you think might have happened on the hunting trip?

* 10. How do you know that Daddy was a safe hunter?

*Recommended for discussion

Debbie's Bike Race

Debra Carrier
Sand Gap Elementary

I had always admired my older brother's ten-speed, racing bike. Its curved handle bars and fancy gears made it seem the next thing to driving a car. Many times I had ridden it in our yard. I always had difficulty with balancing and controlling it. But with many short rides, I came to feel more in control.

One day my friend next door asked me to go riding with her. Without asking my mother and brother, I got onto my brother's bike and took off with her. The trip started at the top of the paved highway in front of our homes and went to the bottom.

We decided at the top of the hill that we would race. I pretended to her that I was ready. In my heart I wondered if I could do it.

Off we started. The ride felt so smooth and easy. I thought to myself how silly I was to think I couldn't do it. just as I thought this, I saw a car coming up the road. A dog was headed straight for my path.

If I swerved to miss the dog, I would hit the car! The next thing I knew, the dog hit my front tire. I flipped over the handle bars. I slid down the pavement and left my flesh on it. Then I went unconscious.

When I came to, the lady in the car was smacking my face and screaming. My scrapes were stinging and my head hurt. Then I went unconscious again. When I awoke this time, my mother was there. She put me in the car and drove to the nearest hospital.

At the hospital I was very much awake. This was the first time I had ever been in a hospital as the patient. I was scared and hurting. I was also ashamed when I looked at my mother's worried face.

A young nurse came in to check my temperature and blood pressure. She asked my mother some questions. I couldn't take my eyes away from all the containers, instruments, and medicine.

Next the doctor came. He checked my head, eyes, and scrapes. He told my mother that I must be observed for three hours to make sure there was no concussion. A concussion is an injury to the head. Then the doctor asked the nurse to clean my scrapes. The nurse was very gentle. She cleaned them and explained every step.

The hours flew by as I watched the busy nurses, doctors, and staff hard at work helping others. I realized that all those unknown fears of hospitals were gone. I thought that if all people, young or old, could have seen what I saw, they would feel much better about going to the hospital.

School started two weeks later. My brother and I had no bicycles because my parents took them after the accident. I had other new things to talk about at school. I had two black and green eyes. I had scratched elbows and knees that were mixed with bruises. Most of all, I had a huge story to share with all my friends about my careless accident and my hospital experience.

Questions

1. What is Debbie like?

2. What is meant by "in control"?

* 3. How is Debbie's Bike Race like something you have done?

* 4. Now that Debbie has made her mistake, what should be done?

* 5. What have you learned from this story?

6. What caused Debbie to take her brother's bike without asking?

7. What could have happened if Debbie had hit the car?

* 8. If Debbie had asked her mother, what might have happened?

* 9. Why was it wrong for Debbie to go on the bike?

* 10. What would you have done if you were Debbie?

* Recommended for discussion

Chad's Big Surprise

Carolyn Ferber
Northaven Elementary

Chad Jones was really excited when he went to sleep last night. He was finally five years old, and this year he was going to school just like all his older friends. When Chad's mother tucked him in bed, they made special plans for Tuesday. They were going to see Dr. Tom for a pre-school check up, get a hair cut, and go out for lunch. Chad could hardly sleep because of his excitement.

Morning finally came, and Chad was up bright and early. In fact, he was the first one at the breakfast table. He gobbled his breakfast and got dressed long before his doctor's appointment.

When it was time to leave, Chad's eyes danced with excitement. This was going to be a very special day! Chad felt so grown up!

Dr. Tom was glad to see Chad. The nurse weighed him, took his temperature and blood pressure, and asked his mom a lot of questions.

Chad lay on his back so Dr. Tom could check his stomach. This is when Dr. Tom got very serious. He asked Chad's mom what she had planned for the day.

Chad's mom said they were going to go out for lunch. Dr. Tom wanted to know if it would be possible to stop by the hospital for an x-ray. Chad's mom was concerned, but Dr. Tom told her he just wanted to check out something. He asked her to feel Chad's stomach. She could feel a lump. An x-ray would let everyone know what the lump was. Chad's mom was very concerned.

After Chad got dressed, he and his mom started to the hospital. Chad had a lot of questions. Chad's mom assured him that an x-ray was nothing but a picture. It would not zap him as he had seen in so many space movies! She told Chad not to worry. The nurses and doctors at the hospital were friends and would be very nice to him. This made Chad feel better!

When they arrived at the hospital, they checked at the front desk to find out where the x-ray room was. The lady told them to go to an admitting office first.

Down the elevator they went. Chad was busy watching all the people as his mother filled out the forms. He couldn't believe how many people were in a hospital working, visiting and being admitted.

When Chad and his mom got to the x-ray room, the nurse explained that Chad's mom would have to wait outside while they took the x-rays. The nurse was so nice that Chad thought that was fine. After all, he was going to school this year!

Afterward, the nurse told Mom that a doctor needed to talk to her. Dr. Young said that Chad had a Wilm's tumor. He explained that it was a malignant tumor attached to the kidney. He said it would require immediate surgery. Chad's mom was in shock, but Chad was excited with his handful of suckers and all the stuffed animals. He didn't seem to notice.

Chad's mom called his dad. He immediately came to the hospital. Dr. Young introduced them to the surgeon. They talked in a room while Chad played.

A nurse from the lab came to take a blood sample. It stung for a minute, but the bright colored bandaid seem to make it all right.

Chad was taken to the playroom. It was really neat! It had millions of toys, an easel with paints, and lots of other fun things to do. Chad really liked it there. When lunch time came, Chad returned to his room, and a lady brought him a tray of food. He especially liked the chocolate pudding.

After lunch a nurse took Chad and his parents on a tour of the hospital. She showed him every place he would be and told him his parents could be with him, too.

When the day for the surgery arrived, Chad was right at home in the hospital. Many friends had come to visit and brought him toys and cards. He loved all the tender loving care he was receiving!

After surgery the doctor came to discuss the follow-up procedure of Chad's operation. He told Mom and Dad that it was *Stage 1* . Chemotherapy was recommended to destroy any remaining cancer cells.

The following day, a nurse came to give Chad the first treatment. It really seemed just like a shot, so Chad wasn't frightened at all.

After two days Chad got to leave the hospital. By this time he was ready to see his puppy and friends in the neighborhood.

For the next six months, Chad went back to see his doctor for check-ups and the remaining chemotherapy. If he was tired after his chemotherapy treatment, he just watched lots of television. Usually he played with his friends.

When Chad started school, he had lots of exciting things to tell the other kids about the hospital and his exciting visits. All the children listened eagerly because they knew nothing about hospitals like Chad did.

Questions

1. What is Chad like?
2. What kind of sickness did Chad have?
3. What is a Wilm's tumor?
4. Where did Chad and his parents go for help?
5. How is Chad different from you?
* 6. How did Chad feel about his hospital visit and his new friends?
* 7. How did the chemotherapy treatments make Chad feel?
* 8. What might have happened to Chad if he had not gone to the hospital for his treatments?
* 9. How would you feel if you discovered you had a Wilm's tumor?
* 10 What kind of encouragement can you offer someone who has a Wilm's tumor?

* Recommended for discussion

We Made It

Connie Smith
Beattyville Elementary

Bells were ringing as Jason rushed down the hall. It seemed as if they were in tune with his mind. The noise sounded like a broken record, repeating over and over, " Ernest is dead! Ernest is dead!" Jason felt as if his head was going to explode.

As Jason neared his classroom door, he stopped in the middle of the hall and looked around him. Other students were smiling and laughing. Anger and confusion swept through his body. How could anyone have fun today? Didn't they care that Ernest was gone? As Jason turned around, he saw Ms. Way step out in the hall by her classroom door. He ran to her and began crying. Ms. Way's arms tightened around Jason's body. Tears filled her eyes in silent understanding. Finally she touched Jason's face and lifted it up to look at. Ms. Way wiped his tears away and led him to his seat.

"Class, by now most of you know something is wrong," said Ms. Way. "If you will look around at your classmates, you will see that we have one person absent. It's Ernest. About eight o'clock last night, I was told that Ernest's body was found in Sturgeon Creek. He drowned while swimming in the creek. I know that all of you have questions to ask. Some of you will feel like I did this morning. I expected to see Ernest walk through the door. This would be a normal reaction. But he didn't, so now is the time to talk. Feel free to ask questions or to share how you feel."

"Why was he at the creek by himself?" asked Todd.

"Ernest's home was close to the creek, and his family had been there with him. When the others left, Ernest stayed behind. When his father missed him at home, it was too late to do anything," answered Ms. Way.

Sam asked, "Why didn't he go home with his parents?"

"I don't know," said Ms. Way, "but we should all learn from this that we are to listen to and obey our parents. They only want what is best for us."

"In other words, if Ernest had obeyed his dad, he might still be alive," said Jessica.

"That's a possibility," answered Ms. Way.

One student asked, "What can we do? Could we send flowers, food or take up money?"

Jason looked around at his friends and said, "We need to go to the funeral. I am better now, Ms. Way, and I am beginning to think about how Ernest's family is feeling. We need to let them know we care."

Ms. Way's whole face smiled as she looked around the room at her students. She said, "Class, you make me proud. You have thought of others' pain instead of your own hurt. That is one of the most unselfish acts a person can do."

With Ms. Way's help, the students organized themselves into groups. One group became responsible for helping their parents take food to the family. Another group picked out flowers for Ernest's grave. Another group went to the funeral home with Ms. Way. The students wrote about Ernest and put their papers into a memory book. Jason volunteered to give the book to the family since he was Ernest's best friend.

Jason reported back to the class what Ernest's father said, "Your class has worked to think about all the good things Ernest had done. This, as time passes, will make the pain and acceptance of death easier, if not more understandable, for us all."

Ms. Way asked the students if this was true? "By staying busy and having positive thoughts, we have made it through this troubled time," she said. Nodding their heads, the class agreed.

When Patrick arrived at the house, his heart was pounding. His body was trembling and dripping with sweat. He screamed to his family what had happened. By this time, his hand and forearm had begun to swell. His mother immediately put him into the car and drove him to the hospital.

Patrick had to stay in the hospital for one whole week! He hated lying in a bed all day, but his hand did feel funny because it was so swollen. It took him several days to get used to the food. He was used to his mother's cooking. The hospital food didn't have enough salt in it.

After Patrick was released from the hospital, he and his family returned to his granny's for their weekly visit. At first, Patrick sat in the house longer than usual. He listened to his granny and mother talk about people he never knew. Being bored he went to the kitchen to get a drink of water. He peered out the kitchen window as he tipped the glass toward the sky to drink. Through that window he could see his favorite hill. He took a long, slow, deep breath and placed his glass on the counter. He decided to take a walk up the road to his hill.

As he walked slowly on the road, he peered into the trees on the hills. They were his window to another world--a world of nature, adventure, and curiosity. He hesitated no longer! He must again open the door into his other world. He climbed and climbed until he reached his favorite oak tree, the one where he had been bitten by the snake. He leaned against the tree. He slid his back down the coarse bark until he reached the ground. Once again, he closed his eyes to listen to the sounds of nature that he loved so dearly.

He opened his eyes and said to himself, "This is my Heaven on Earth."

Personal Triumph

Recinda Rader
Eastern Kentucky University

As soon as Patrick's family arrived at his grandmother's farm, Patrick was immediately thinking about the many adventures he would have that day. His granny's farm was his favorite place to visit. He often thought he would like to live there one day. The farm was nestled in the heart of Eastern Kentucky. It had steep hills, winding streams, and lots of woods. This is just what any mischievious boy needs.

While his granny and mother began to prepare dinner, Patrick thought he would climb his favorite hill. It had a stream lined with trees with sturdy vines to swing on. It also had a rock cliff. Sometimes he pretended he was a true mountain man living deep in the wilderness.

Patrick sat down underneath a large oak tree after an hour of play. He closed his eyes. He relaxed his whole body. He listened to the sounds all around. He heard the wind running through the trees, rustling their leaves one tree at a time. Birds were singing, and the water was rippling over the slick, flat rocks in the stream. "This is my Heaven on Earth," Patrick said aloud.

Patrick thought he had sat there long enough. He'd better go to the house because dinner would be ready soon. To help himself get up, he placed his right hand in a fern plant on the ground beside him. Just as he did so, a sharp pain ran through the top of his hand right up to his elbow. At first he thought there were sharp stickers growing in the fern plant, but then he noticed two red dots on the top of his hand. He knew right away that a snake had bitten him. Patrick was sure it was a poisonous snake because it left imprints. He took no time looking for the snake. Quickly, he removed the bandana from his forehead. Using his left hand and teeth, he tied it above his elbow. This would prevent the poison from spreading. He knew this because he'd seen it in a movie.

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Questions

1. What does the word *mischievious* mean?
2. Why was Granny's farm Patrick's favorite place to visit?
3. What should Patrick do to avoid snakes?
4. What would be a good name for Patrick's favorite hill?
* 5. Why did Patrick not want to go to the hill after his visit to the hospital?
* 6. Why is the story title "Personal Triumph"?
* 7. What could you have done to help Patrick if you had been there when he was bitten by the snake?
* 8. What would you have done if you had been bitten by the snake? Why?
* 9. Was it good or bad for Patrick to climb the hill after he got out of the hospital? Would you have climbed the hill?
* 10. What safety technique, or first aid technique, have you seen on televsion or in a movie?

* Recommended for discussion

Opie's Dream

Cheryl Mobley
Carter Traditional School

Howdy! My name is Opie. I'm twelve years old. I live in the country with my mom, dad, and two brothers. Oh, yeah, I have a cat named Cooa and a dog named Shena. My favorite singer is Dwight Yoakam. Beans and cornbread are my favorite foods. I live a simple life, but I have BIG DREAMS.

I haven't been to school for two years. A tutor comes to my house. Math is my favorite subject. I don't always feel like learning. You see, I have an awful disease. There is no cure for the type of cancer that I have. I have a brain tumor that keeps growing. The left side of my face is paralyzed. I can't move it, and I have a hard time talking. Some people don't understand what I say. My tutor understands me. She's neat! I don't know if I will ever get to go back to school with my friends.

One Friday night I got really sick. A helicopter whizzed me away to Kosair Children's Hospital. The doctors and nurses were waiting. They were great! But I still would have rather been at home.

I get these really bad headaches and start feeling dizzy. At night I have to use a machine to help me breathe. Sometimes I have a tube down my nose to feed me. That hurts and makes me sad. I'd rather eat at McDonald's.

Today some nice people visited the hospital. They were learning to be teachers. They were writing stories about children at Kosair Children's Hospital. One nice lady asked me what my biggest dream was. That was my favorite question. Nobody has ever asked me that question before. I told her my BIGGEST DREAM was to meet Hulk Hogan in person. I told her I love wrestling. I could watch it for hours on T.V.

I started to get tired after answering questions. In just two hours I was scheduled for surgery. At first I was afraid, but now I have something to take back to my room with me--my dream of meeting Hulk Hogan. I forgot about my surgery for the next two hours. I thought to myself, "Wouldn't it be nice if those people could bring Hulk Hogan to meet me!" And, do you know what? That's exactly what the people are planning to do! They are planning to make Opie's Dream come true!

Questions

1. What is Opie like?

2. What grade do you think Opie should be in? What clues tell you this?

* 3. What was meant when Opie said he lived a simple life but had BIG DREAMS?

4. What does the word *paralyzed* mean?

5. What might Opie have been thinking about on his helicopter ride ?

* 6. What concerns Opie about his illness?

7. What could have happened if Opie had not been rushed to the hospital by helicopter?

* 8. How would you feel if you found out you had an incurable disease?

9. What did you learn from Opie's story?

10. How will you treat people with incurable diseases now that you have read this story about Opie?

*Recommended for discussion

My Special Saturday

Sue Anderson
Maple Elementary School

Did you ever get so excited about something special that you could hardly go to sleep the night before? That's how I felt before my first Little League Parade Day. What a special Saturday it would be!

Finally, that Saturday morning came. My coach's truck was waiting for us in the parking lot. Everybody got to help decorate it. I was helping in the back of the truck. When I decided to jump off to get something, I caught my foot on the metal railing. My mom turned just as I was jumping. She was too far away to keep me from landing face-down on the concrete. My head was pounding, and my hand and leg hurt really badly, too. Everyone was standing above me. I was embarrassed that I had fallen. Dad carefully checked me. My parents and coach knew that I needed x-rays at the hospital. My special Saturday was going to be ruined!

By the time we got to the hospital, I didn't feel good at all. I could walk but just barely! As we went into the emergency room, I vomited. This was a signal to the nurse that I might have a concussion; that means a hard hit on my brain.

The nurse quickly took me and my family back to an examination room to wait for the doctor. I got to lie on a stretcher --one of those beds with wheels. I still had on my baseball uniform. When the doctor came in, he asked me all about my team. I liked that. It made him seem like a friend. Then he wanted to see where I was hurt. He was careful not to hurt me, but he did need to press and feel to see if I was okay. He said I needed x-rays; those are pictures of your bones taken with a special machine.

My parents and little brother got to push me in a wheelchair to the x-ray room. I had to lie still while the nurse used a machine to take these special pictures. It didn't hurt at all. We went back to the examination room to wait for the doctor. The nurse brought in some old x-rays so I could see what mine might look like. She said I could even take these home to show my friends. Did that make me feel better!

Then the doctor came in with my x-rays. He showed us that there were no broken bones in my hand or my leg. Then he showed us four pictures of my head. He was happy because these were normal. That means I had no concussion or crack in the bones of my head. My family had big smiles on their faces, and I had a good feeling inside, too. The doctor said I needed to be quiet and take it easy for the rest of the day.

When we left the hospital, the nurse gave my little brother and me white hats that were just for kids. I had the x-rays that the nurse gave me, too. Maybe I did miss the parade, but this had still been a special Saturday! I found out that the hospital was a place that could help me feel better.

As we drove home, my parents told me that I would be just in time to *watch* my team play for a little while. It was a great day after all!

Questions

* 1. How would you feel if you missed something special that you had waited a long time for?

* 2. What would you do if you had a broken hand? Tell how it might change some things you do everyday?

* 3. List the things that happened to the boy at the hospital.

* 4. What is a concussion? Why would a concussion be dangerous?

5. What are x-rays?

* 6. Why do people ride in wheelchairs? How do you think it would make you feel?

7. What did the boy get to take home from the hospital?

8. What made the boy's parents happy?

* 9. How could the boy have prevented this accident?

* 10. How do you think the boy will feel if he has to go to the hospital in the future?

* Recommended for discussion